Working Effectively in Interdisciplinary Teams
Three Stages of Team Development

Back with me are Linda, Abbie, Karen and Jude. Now we're going to talk to the stages of team development, team pitfalls and then some scenarios. So let's get into the three stages of team development. You can follow along beginning on page 24 of your Participant Guide. Linda, it's all yours.

Thanks, Joe. We're going to be looking at three stages of team development, the first stage is the orientation stage. It would be rare for a team to just start off and soar to the finish line without going through some development. Teams go through a series of stages before working at the highest productivity levels. Let's look at stage 1. Some of the characteristics of stage 1 is some people, you'll probably see all these behaviors when a team first starts on a project or you work on something together, there are some people who have very polite behaviors, some people appear to be very reserved and we've seen that occasional person who is just plain uptight. Work issues will be important to establish in this first phase. What goals will the team come up with and agree on? How will objectives be established? And how will priorities be set? Everybody has some personal issues when they first come into the team. How much energy am I going to give to the team? How much influence will have in the team? How much influence will others have over me?

There's a lot of WIIFMs going on, that's our acronym for "what in it for me," what value will I get out every being on the team? Then there's plain curiosity, what it's all going to

be about. Some of the strategies when a team is in stage 1 are these. It's important to break the ice and get everyone participating early in the program. Solicit the input of all team members, and there is that Humor, in this case having fun in the very beginning can start the team off on the right foot.

Once a team is passed through stage 1, they move into the power and tasking phase. This is the most volatile stage for a team. It is where the team actually organizes. If the team is going to fall apart, unfortunately, it usually happens in this stage. Some of the characteristics of this stage is norms are established. These can be explicit, such as your ground rules we talked about earlier, or they could be implicit, which means they basically just sort of develop in the team. Cliques can develop in a team during this stage and one of the problems with those is that they could lead to coalitions if there's not something done to stop that from happening.

Control and power are huge issues during this stage, who has it and who doesn't. Hidden agendas may surface and we'll talk more about those later. Work issues are around such things as roles and responsibility, who is going to do what, who is going to be responsible for what. This can be a pretty tense process for the team. Personal issues, everybody has issues related to control, leadership. By the way, leadership, and we're talking about true leadership, will often bounce around in the team, not who the team lead is, but who is actually being listened to and followed by the team. It will bounce around and eventually fall on true leaders within the team. Now, another issue is influence. Once again, who has it, who doesn't, who do I influence, who influences me? Some of the strategies for getting through phase 2 are to be tolerant of different opinions.

We talked earlier with Elena about differences in styles and behaviors and we need to do that in this stage. Listening and negotiating, learning to manage emotions such as anger, frustration, resentments that may show in the team and dealing with those differences again of our membership of the team. And it's important to be sensitive to feelings in this phase. People sometimes are wearing them on the outside where they're pretty easy to harm. Now, I want to share something about this phase before -- this stage before we mover onto stage 3. It is a volatile stage. Some teams, however, mover through it very quickly and without hardly any pain.

Some teams actually never get through it and have a hard time getting through the problems that are associated with getting all of those issues established and remedied in the team. Once a team passes through stage 2, the next stage is stage 3. This is the point where the team becomes effective. It's a team production and feedback stage. Some of the characteristics of this stage 3 is a lot of openness and team spirit. Those become very evident on the team. There's a level of cohesion. The team is bonded. They begin to work as a single well-oiled unit. Productivity skyrockets. There is the levels of cooperation. One of the reasons this is true is our work issues have been resolve.

As well as our personal issues have been resolved. So all that's needed to be done in the strategies, once a team actually is in stage 3s to keep the team on track. If someone is in leadership position, a team lead or someone is doing that, it may be important to not over control the team, to let the team go. They're moving at a rapid pace, they're basically self-managed at this stage, and they're able to make decisions. One of the

things that's real critical in this step is to make sure that tasks continue to be distributed evenly. If some members start to do all the work and other members are not, the team can slide back out of stage 3. And always, a lot of praise and a lot of recognition, and we talked about that. I'd like to ask my team here what can cause a team to slide out of stage 3 once they've reached there?

Well.

Well, I would probably say that the roles or the responsibilities are starting to get muddy because perhaps a new member has joined the team.

A new member will always cause the team to move back and move through from the first stage to the last. Good news is that once a team has reached that third stage, they know how to get through it pretty quickly from that point on.

Seems like a new manager in the office could have a similar effect as a new team member, both in affecting how the team functions and what the goals of the team might be.

Absolutely.

Changing priorities have a lot to do with it, too. I would like to caution in any team setting that priorities are going to change and maintaining that communication with managers is going to be really critical.

Absolutely.

Another situation is people bringing up discussions on the side after a decision is made and even in smaller groups, and it can sabotage an effort.

Right. Absolutely.